

## Community resources

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*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 08NIAMEY1183, SBU) NIGER: GOVERNMENT OF CANADA SENDS SPECIAL

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#08NIAMEY1183**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">08NIAMEY1183</a>	<a href="#">2008-12-30 13:58</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">SECRET</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Niamey</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://aptn.ca/pages/news/2011/05/05/canada-frustrated-by-niger-during-search-for-kidnapped-diplomats-fowler-and-guay/>

VZCZCXRO7267  
RR RUEHPA  
DE RUEHNM #1183/01 3651358  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
R 301358Z DEC 08  
FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4789  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS 3473  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 0563  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0770  
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

d: 185202  
date: 12/30/2008 13:58  
refid: 08NIAMEY1183  
origin: Embassy Niamey  
classification: SECRET  
destination: 08NIAMEY1160|08NIAMEY1166  
header:  
VZCZCXRO7267  
RR RUEHPA

DE RUEHNM #1183/01 3651358  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
R 301358Z DEC 08  
FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4789  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

----- header ends -----

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 NIAMEY 001183

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/W, DS, INR, DS/IP/AF, EUR/CAN AND CA  
PARIS FOR AF WATCHER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/30/2018

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [NG](#) [CA](#) [XY](#)

SUBJECT: (SBU) NIGER: GOVERNMENT OF CANADA SENDS SPECIAL  
ENVOY TO INQUIRE ABOUT MISSING CANADIANS

REF: A. NIAMEY 1166

[1](#)B. NIAMEY 1160

NIAMEY 00001183 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Ambassador Bernadette M. Allen, Reasons 1.4 b/d

[1](#)1. (S) Summary. The Government of Canada (GOC) dispatched its Deputy Foreign Minister (DFM) for La Francophonie Jacques Bilodeau to the Republic of Niger (RON) for two days of consultations with Government of Niger (GON) officials on the disappearances of United Nations Special Envoy (SE) Robert Fowler and Special Assistant Louis Guay, both Canadian citizens. Deputy FM Bilodeau, accompanied by Canadian Ambassador Isabelle Massip (resident in Abidjan) and Department of Foreign Affairs International Trade Canada (DFAIT) Middle East Division Deputy Director Louise Corbin, called on Ambassador Allen on December 29, 2008, to express gratitude for Embassy staff and U.S. Government support provided to the Canadian Government with the ongoing case. Bilodeau expects to visit Bamako, Ouagadougou and possibly Algiers, in the next few days to meet with government officials there prior to returning to Ottawa (via Paris). He spoke of GOC frustration with the Nigerien National Police (NP) and its unwillingness to share information with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). He said his meeting with GON Minister of Interior Adouba Albade wasn't useful, but he hoped a later scheduled meeting with GON President Mamadou Tandja would prove beneficial in securing better cooperation from GON security officials. He was unable to meet with GON Foreign Minister (FM) Aichatou Mindaoudou and Minister of Justice Dagra Mamadou, both reported to be out of town. He was scheduled to meet with Minister of National Defense Djida Hamadou in his role as Acting FM. Bilodeau complained that the NP had mishandled evidence in the earliest stages of the search for the two Canadians and Nigerien driver, Soumana Mounkaila. He stated he was perplexed as to why the NP continued to focus solely within Niger for the two Canadians and driver, opined that the GON may intentionally be providing misinformation to the RCMP. He asked Ambassador for her views about the NP actions, her insight on how President Tandja may react in discussions of the case and her thoughts on how this case may unravel. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) GOC DFM for La Francophone Jacques Bilodeau, accompanied by Canadian Ambassador Massip and DFAIT Middle East Division DepDir Corbin, paid a December 29 call on Ambassador Allen to express gratitude for US Embassy Niamey's (and the US Government) support to the GOC in efforts to locate Canadian nationals Fowler and Guay. Bilodeau (a retired Canadian diplomat) arrived in Niamey on December 28 with a scheduled December 30 departure from Niamey to Bamako. He said that he and Fowler have been very close friends for over 30 years, so the case was that much more compelling for him. Ambassador Allen responded that it was only natural for the USG to assist the GOC as a neighbor and friend, and added that Embassy Niamey would continue to do so.

[1](#)3. (S) Bilodeau and Massip expressed frustration about the

Nigerien NP unwillingness to collaborate with RCMP counterparts. They stated the NP demonstrated insufficient skills to conduct a thorough investigation when it mishandled evidence (the vehicle and materials left behind in the vehicle) that may otherwise have been good leads in the earlier stages of the search. They said the NP has not shared sufficient information with the several RCMP officers assigned to the case and, to often, simply responds that the NP has the matter under control. They were dismayed that the NP continues to operate under the assumption that Fowler, Guay and Mounkaila could solely be located somewhere in Niger. Bilodeau questioned whether the NP may be intentionally providing misinformation to the RCMP. He stated the Direction Generale de la Documentation and External Security (DGDSE) that handles intelligence work appeared more professional, but also had been guarded in its sharing of information with the GOC. Ambassador Allen pointed out that the various Nigerien security services generally were not keen on sharing information with each other, thus the NP are likely treating the RCMP in the same light. She added that while the NP may be providing misinformation on the case, there is also a possibility that NIAMEY 00001183 002.2 OF 002

the Nigeriens do not want to acknowledge publicly how easy it was for persons to slip across the border into and out of Niger without detection by Nigerien authorities. She added it may be a matter of "face" or pride, that the GON will not make known its shortcomings on border security, will likely only react if/when a public statement is made by persons involved in the disappearances.

14. (S) Bilodeau reported that GON Minister of Interior Albade was no help whatsoever with efforts to improve collaboration between the NP and RCMP. He said Albade suggested Bilodeau speak with GON Minister of Justice Dagra because the Prosecutor General's office in Niamey falls under Dagra's authority and is the office holding evidence collected in the case. Bilodeau learned that Dagra was out of town. Ambassador Allen asked about the role of FM Mindaoudou in this matter, but Ambassador Massip responded that the FM also was out of town, that Minister of Defense Djida was filling the role as Acting FM. Ambassador Allen informed Bilodeau and Massip that the FM is scheduled to host at the FM's residence a New Year's eve event, thus likely would return to town at some point on December 30 to prepare for the event, but Bilodeau stated he expected to depart Niamey prior to Mindaoudou's return.

15. (S) Bilodeau asked Ambassador Allen in what manner she thought Tandja may behave in a discussion about the disappearances and the NP lack of collaboration on the case. He wanted to know how she thought the case may conclude. Allen replied that if Tandja is defensive about the case, then Bilodeau should expect that Tandja will be stubborn and unhelpful in getting the NP to collaborate. She added, however, that given the passage of time, with the case being more than two weeks old, Tandja may now think it not a good thing for Niger to have not resolved the case. She said he appeared to be in high spirits following the several successful events for the 50th Anniversary of Republic Day. She stated Tandja may not want the GON to be viewed as uncooperative with the Canadians, consequently be seen internationally in a negative light. If the latter is true, then Tandja likely will order the NP to collaborate fully with the RCMP. Allen added that once there is public knowledge about the whereabouts of the three men, Tandja may not deal well with the international community knowing that the GON security forces are unable to secure the country's borders and the thought that the international community may judge it unsafe to travel to Niger. As to how the case may unravel, Allen stated it was difficult to know, but wouldn't be surprising for a ransom demand to materialize, as had occurred in other recent cases in the Sahel region.

16. (S) Ambassador Allen asked Massip how much longer she would remain in Niamey. Massip replied she will remain in Niamey until such time as the locations of the Canadians becomes public knowledge, that she is prepared to remain in Niger until such time it becomes necessary for her to relocate to another capital in the region.

17. (C) There was brief discussion of the political scene as

it relates to calls for Tandja to extend his time in office beyond the December 2009 end date for his currently unrenewable mandate. Allen mentioned that calendar year 2009 will likely be especially active with demonstrations until such time as Tandja speaks on the matter, that his only statement about stepping down was more than a year ago in Paris in a "Le Monde" interview. She stated that demonstrations for or against Tandja's prolongation of time in office, to date, have not been violent.

18. (C) Bilodeau closed the meeting by reporting he would travel to Bamako on December 30 to meet with Malian President Amadou Toumani Toure about the missing Canadians. Subsequently, he hopes to travel to Ouagadougou to speak with Burkinabe President Blaise Compoare for his take on the case. He raised the possibility that Algiers may be added to his itinerary, depending upon developments, before he returns to Ottawa (via Paris).  
Minimize considered.

ALLEN

=====CABLE ENDS=====